

Message Text

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TAGS: MILI, MASS, CA, NATO, EAIR, ETRD, EIND

SUBJ: CANADA SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING PURCHASE OF

F-15 FIGHTER

1. WELL-INFORMED OTTAWA JOURNAL CORRESPONDENT JOHN BEST PUBLISHED COLUMN ON JULY 23 ENTITLED "CANADA MAY BUCK TREND AND CHOOSE F-15 FIGHTER." ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, STAFF OFFICERS IN DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE ARE READY TO RECOMMEND THE MCDONNELL-DOUGLAS F-15 AS THE NEW COMBAT AIRCRAFT FOR THE CANADIAN FORCES. THE PURCHASE COULD BE WORTH CLOSE TO \$1 BILLION.

2. BEST QUOTES GENERAL WILLIAM CARR, WHO HAS BEEN IN CHARGE OF A STUDY OF THE QUESTION, AS SAYING, "FROM PRACTICALLY ALL POINTS OF VIEW, THE F-15 IS THE FRONT-RUNNER, BASED ON ALL THE THINGS WE WANT THE AIRPLANE TO DO."

APPARENTLY THE F-15 IS FAVORED ON THE BASIS OF A COMBINATION OF FACTORS INCLUDING RANGE, NUMBER OF ENGINES, AND VERSATILITY. GENERAL CARR HAS ESTIMATED THAT CANADA WILL REQUIRE APPROXIMATELY 100 SUCH AIRCRAFT. HOWEVER, GENERAL CARR, WHO HAS JUST ASSUMED HIS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ARMED FORCES NEW AIR COMMAND, EMPHASIZED THAT NO RECOMMENDATIONS CAN BE PLACED BEFORE

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THE GOVERNMENT UNTIL THE DEFENSE STRUCTURE REVIEW, WHICH IS

CURRENTLY UNDER WAY BY THE GOC, IS COMPLETED.

3. JOHN BEST CONCLUDES HIS ARTICLE BY CONJECTURING THAT "THE DEFENCE DEPARTMENT MAY FIND IT HARD TO PRY THE REQUIRED SPENDING AUTHORITY FROM THE CABINET IF BY THAT TIME THE CABINET HAS APPROVED PLANS FOR A NEW LONG-RANGE PATROL AIRCRAFT (LRPA) FOR THE FORCES. THE LRPA PROGRAM WHICH TOO CAN APPROACH \$1 BILLION IN COST IS SCHEDULED TO BE CONSIDERED BY MINISTERS WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK OR SO. THEY MIGHT CONSIDER TWO SUCH COSTLY DEFENSE PROGRAMS TOO MUCH TO SWALLOW IN ONE YEAR."

4. COMMENT: BEST IS PROBABLY CORRECT IN POINTING OUT THE FINANCIAL DILEMMA IN WHICH THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT FINDS ITSELF REGARDING THE PURCHASE OF NEW MILITARY EQUIPMENT. IT HAS POSTPONED PURCHASES SO LONG THAT IT NOW MUST CONSIDER GREATLY INCREASED EXPENDITURES IF IT WANTS TO MODERNIZE PROPERLY. BEST'S CONJECTURE THAT THE GOC MAY THEREFORE DELAY A DECISION ON FIGHTER AIR-CARFT IS VALID. JOHNSON

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